

Urgent Care Centres in the United Kingdom

Authors : Mohammad Ansari, Satinder Mann, Ahmed Ismail

Abstract : Primary care patients in Emergency Departments (ED) have been the topic of discussion since 1998 in the United Kingdom. Numerous studies have analysed attendances in EDs retrospectively and suggest that at least one third to fifty percent patients attending ED with problems which could be managed appropriately in General Practice or minor injuries units. The pattern of ED Usage seems to be International. In Australia and many departments in the United States include walk in facilities staffed by physicians on family practice residency programme. It clearly appears in the United Kingdom that EDs have to accept that such patients with primary care problems will attend the ED and facilities will have to be provided to see and treat such patients. Urgent care centres were introduced in the United Kingdom nearly a decade ago to reduce the pressure on EDs. Most of these were situated near pre-existing EDs. Unfortunately these centres failed to have the desired effect of reducing the number of patients visiting EDs, it has been noticed that when more patients were seen in Urgent Care centres there were increased attendances in ED as well. A new model of Urgent Care centre was started in the ED of George Eliot Hospital, Nuneaton, UK. We looked at the working of the centre by looking at the number of patients seen daily against the number of total attendances in the ED. We studied the number and type of patients seen by the Urgent Care Doctor. All the medical records of the patients were seen and the time patients spent in the Urgent Care centre was recorded. The total number of patients seen during this study were 1532. 219 (14.3%) were seen within our Urgent Care centre. None of the patients waited over four hours to be seen. It has been recognised that primary care patients in the ED are a major part of attendances of the department and unless these patients are seen in Urgent Care centres, overcrowding and long waits cannot be avoided. It has been shown that employing primary care Physicians in Urgent Care centres reduces overall cost because they do not carry out as many investigations as Junior Doctors. In our study over 14% patients were seen by Urgent Care Physicians and none of the patients waited for more than four hours and we feel that care provided to the patients by Urgent Care centre was highly effective and satisfying for the patient.

Keywords : urgent care centres, primary care physicians, overcrowding, cost

Conference Title : ICEM 2017 : International Conference on Emergency Medicine

Conference Location : Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Conference Dates : November 24-25, 2017